



BULLETIN

The North American Paul Tillich Society

Volume XLV, Number 3

2019

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

—Coming in the Fall Bulletin:

The entire issue will be dedicated to the memories, reflections, and remarks of Paul Tillich’s grandson, Theodore Farris. Mr. Farris, a retiring member of our Board, is an attorney working in New York City. He has many memories of his grandfather and grandmother both in New York, when Tillich was a professor at Union Theological Seminary, and their summers at their home in the Hamptons on eastern Long Island. It is a distinct honor for the Bulletin to publish these reflections, and I am personally most grateful to Ted for his offering to do so.

—If you are still receiving the bulletin by U.S. mail and would like to switch to an E-copy, please let the secretary-treasurer know as soon as possible. The NAPTS would save a great deal of money by sending the bulletin to its members electronically. Thank you very much.

—If you have delivered a paper at the 2018 meeting of the North American Paul Tillich Society or at the Tillich sessions at the AAR/SBL, “Tillich: Issues in Religion, Theology, and Culture,” please forward your presentation to the Secretary-Treasurer of the North American Paul Tillich Society for publication in the autumn bulletin of the Society.

Send it to the address below under Dues

Thank you.

**WORDS FROM THE EDITOR:
IT'S DUES TIME**

FREDERICK J. PARRELLA

The lazy, hazy days of summer, with the dog days of August, are over. It is time to recall the enjoyment of the last of the Summer weekends in the Hamptons, in one of the many lakes of Minnesota, or in that beach house somewhere between Malibu and Monterey on the Pacific. It is time to get the digital photos of happy times organized.

Wherever members of the North American Paul Tillich Society are at the end of summer, they share something in common: it is time to pay dues for the calendar year of 2019. Please remit

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NEW PUBLICATIONS

Nathaniel Berman, "In A Place Parallel to God': The Draft, the Demonic, and the Conscientious Objector," *Journal of Law and Religion* (2017), 1-29.

**CLIMATE, CARBON,
AND "GROUND OF ALL BEING"**

PAUL H. CARR

Science and Religion Paper Titles: Parliament of World Religions, Nov 1-7, 2018, Toronto, Canada

Paul Carr is happy to announce this conference to the NAPTS members. It will have 8000 Parliament Participants. The following information was provided for the Bulletin:

- IRAS Session Chairs: Paul H. Carr, Mladen Turk
- Organizers: Maynard Moore (IRAS), Ron Cole-Turner (ISSR)
- Possibility of Inclusion: Science and Religion. V.V. Raman
- A real God in our scientific universe: Letting it

- teach us about God. Nancy Ellen Abrams.
- Food scarcity, safety, imbalance, and population challenges. Solomon Katz
- Ordinary faith, ordinary science. Nobel Laure-

your check as soon as possible—made out to The North American Paul Tillich Society, *not to me*—and send

Prof. Frederick J Parrella
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The amount is \$60 for full-time membership, \$30 for full-time graduate students. *Those members of the society who are retired may pay according to their means.*

If you have questions, please contact me by email, text, or phone.

Many thanks as always.

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ate William Phillips

—Re-envisioning hope, religious naturalism. Carol Wayne White

—Science and ethics of CRSPR gene editing for future generations. Janet Rossant & James Peterson

—The Rabbi's Brain: neurotheology and compassion. Andrew Newberg and Rabbi David Halprin

—The origin of evil & the brain network. William Shoemaker

—The new search for life in our galaxy. Michael Summers.

—Science, religion and global justice. Fraser Watts (ISSR)

—Understanding science through participation. Grace Wolf-Chase

—Plenary Session: People of Faith for Our Earth

ADDICTION AND RECOVERING GOD

DANIEL BOSCALJON

When people think of addiction or recovery, they often think of Alcoholics Anonymous (or cognate groups, like Al-Anon, Overeaters Anonymous, or Narcotics Anonymous) and about its component elements. These involve the twelve steps to recovery, the serenity prayer, and the ritualized introduction: "Hello, I'm _____, and I am a _____." The group celebrates milestones of sobriety and forms a spiritual community within a

secularized context. As Jerome A. Miller and Nicholas Plants write in the introduction to their collection *Sobering Wisdom*, “The genius of Twelve Step spirituality lay in its ability to provide those living in this secularized culture a way to address their longing for meaning without having to adhere to a particular religious faith or defined theology.”

Introduction

Addicts are an increasingly prominent part of a vulnerable American population: although addiction is chronically underreported, opiate addiction is now responsible for around 115 deaths a day, and more than 20 million Americans are thought to struggle with alcohol addiction. Addiction, which emerges in part from the confluence of a social inability to acknowledge suffering with a capitalist market set to profit on consumption, is an increased fact of life in America. My initial thought was that theologies of addiction can serve a role similar to what has been done for other oppressed and overlooked communities through the intervention of Black theology, Queer theology, and Disability theology and to provide a rigorous framework for action such as has been prompted by ecotheological studies.

This paper has two main sections. The first section deploys Tillich’s traditional notion of how symbols provide both existential courage and a context for communal life through the mediation of the God above the God of Theism. I believe that this model adequately accounts for the success of 12-Step recovery programs like AA. The second, and more interesting, part of the paper contrasts this Addict God with what I want to call a Recovering God.

The Symbolic Dimension of Addiction

Groups of addicts, in recovery or otherwise, and religious communities share certain structural similarities. The object of addiction points beyond itself to the experience of a high and like a religious symbol, mediate the experience. This follows the first part of Tillich’s description of a symbol: the objects of addiction participate in that which they point (even at a biochemical level) and

open up a level of reality that is otherwise closed. Moreover, the fetishization and celebration of objects of addiction, glamorizing even the tragedies that they invite, suggests that it would be arguable to see such objects as acquiring the symbolic depth of non-intentional production and, as the object of choice vacillates relative to cultural trends, one can see individual symbols aging, growing old, and dying. Note how American culture generally has at least one object of addiction that symbolizes the rest—whether alcohol in the 20s, cocaine in the 80s, or meth in the early 00s—keeping a structured space for the symbol of addiction to be continually reborn.

In a secular world, addictions serve a similar function to what religious symbols once did. They provide users with a sense of ritual, a structure and logic to the day, a common vocabulary, and experiences that interrupt the banality of ordinary time in the everyday world. Generally, objects of addiction are encountered and embraced in communal spaces alongside others who normalize the behavior. Consider how overindulgence is socially justified when one celebrates and when one mourns. Like an ultimate concern, addictions structure and suture worlds around a central organizational modality. As J. Jeremy Wisniewski states in his phenomenological account of addiction, “every other care and concern is subordinated to a central obsession: consumption of the object of addiction...the intelligibility of other things becomes indexed to what one craves.” (22).

Interestingly, unlike many religious symbols, objects of addiction retain their temporary status and thus admit to their innate lack of ultimacy. This is likely due to the nature of addiction, which moves from an intense sense of present (intoxication) to an equally intense sense of absence (withdrawal): its potency is undeniably limited and finite. In addition, objects of addiction allow access to a different experience, but remain grounded in the matrix of desire from which they emerge. Eventually, as tolerance builds, the addict’s craving transitions from a desire for a high to a desire to avoid withdrawal, a desire for a semblance of normality. One interesting contrast to Tillich’s analysis that I will not cover in this paper is how objects of addiction seem to anchor addicts to a ground of non-being, the experience of negation,

loss, and finitude, rather than the experience of Being-itself.

Communities of addicts are formed, without regard to the traditional elements that divide humans. Addiction does not respect age, education, political affiliation, religious belief, race, class, or gender. At the core of addiction is an aversion to feeling pain: whether one was introduced to an object of addiction through a desire to escape (the thrill of a high) or whether it entered through a desire to temporarily suspend trauma is unimportant. Addictions offer a way to avoid other problems until it becomes the only problem one has, from waking to sleeping to death.

The Symbology of the Addict God

The first three of twelve steps toward recovery explicitly summon the symbol of a god as the central component of its faith. The first two steps effect a substitution of one symbol for another, one named and one unnamed, each of which has power over the individual and the community.

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

Written in the first-person plural, the twelve steps presume a sense of community that the speaker, in repeating the words, has always already joined. Different groups alter some terms, substituting, for example, a different object of addiction for “alcohol,” but groups also will rephrase terms like “God” or “sanity” to better reflect their particular needs.

The Addict God works by providing a bland but beneficent “power” to replace the destructive object of addiction. The third step emphasizes *decision* but suggests that, at most, one can choose a central entity that remains beyond one’s control. This decision, a willing to stop willing, will restore one to a life that becomes managed. In the steps, the more complex symbol of “God” produced out of a religious tradition is converted into a purely functional, utilitarian role—a sort of existential cognate to the Deist watchmaker god—

who offers a possible potency but no promises.

Note, too, that this god does *nothing*. It doesn’t even need to exist, really. It simply serves as a site of something that “we” came to believe. Lives are turned over to this god, and this god receives admissions of moral failure. The group is “ready to have God remove all these defects of character” and they “humbly asked him to remove our shortcomings,” but there’s no statement that God *acts* in any way. The God is posited and remains an object of contemplation, presupposed in the logic of the group, but not an active force of salvation. At the same time, even though it does nothing, that nothing remains something *greater than* each individual and the sum total of individuals within the group, a group that owes its cohesion to the shared recognition of nothing—but a nothing that maintains a power differential capable of exercising control, even as a place holder.

The Community

These groups and this God reflect the logic of addiction: the ritual introduction reveals the repetition and return. Most cities have multiple chapters of AA that meet throughout the day, every day. They mark anniversaries of sobriety, tell stories of struggles, and share wisdom gained as they live and meditate through the stages and the books. The testimonies tend to center on the cycle of life between meetings—the notion that life is a constant struggle, that one is never recovered but always in recovery—one is always an addict, or an alcoholic. This kind of cycle is reminiscent of at least some Protestant visions of salvation, in which one continually is tempted by sin and thus constantly requires the redeeming power of Christ.

In many ways, AA mediates members’ movements through the Tillichian framework of courage. Addicts are encouraged to see themselves as having the courage to be both as a part and as one’s self—this occurs in the action of sharing at meetings, as the vocal contributions are simultaneously an expression of self and a way to identify with and as part of the group. Additionally, with its emphasis on the higher power, and the notion of “God as we understand Him,” AA encourages people to work through issues of fate,

guilt, and meaninglessness. Steps 1-3, admitting powerlessness and turning over one's will and life to a God, introduces members to the struggle between freedom and determination and the extent to one's responsibility. Steps 4-9 work through the process of guilt and condemnation and the need to accept acceptance. The question of how to find meaning in meaninglessness is often the paradox at the heart of recovery—the object of addiction is simultaneously that which makes life meaningful and unbearable.

The Addict God thus seems strongly akin to Tillich's sense of the God above the God of theism: it is what emerges from former symbols to "create the courage to be in spite of the experience of a chaotic world and a finite existence" and frames "the absolute faith which says Yes to being without seeing anything concrete which could conquer the nonbeing in fate and death." It also is that which bridges the gap "between what we are and what we ought to be," and finally is at the boundary line that takes the anxiety of meaninglessness on itself.

What troubles me about the Addict God is its sense of triumphalism and the way that it leads to a diminution of human agency by reasserting a hierarchical central symbol. The triumphalism tracks through Tillich's theology, seen as he argues that only "the Church under the Cross" "can mediate a courage which takes doubt and meaninglessness into itself (CTB, 188). The Addict God retains a sense of providence and consolation, qualities that Paul Ricoeur argues should be purged after the critique of atheism—the crisis of meaninglessness. The logic of overcoming and control, which is part of what phenomenologists have identified as ingredient to addiction, persists within this theological model. Additionally, even if the "higher" power remains a convenient but effective fiction, the consequence of covering over the space previously occupied by an object of desire with the notion of something "higher" is to still provide believers with a sense of being-determined by an authority. The Addict God offers determinism without returning autonomy.

Recovering God: Context

I now will explore an alternative model of

God that remains latent within AA, one that retains the emphasis on anonymity and democracy but without the sense of hierarchy. My theoretical anchors for this vision are Jane Bennett's *Vibrant Matter*, Thomas Altizer's *Total Presence*, and John Caputo's *Weak Theology*. Together, these sources sketch the interrelationships connecting God, community, and symbol in a way that remains humble but provides a greater sense of individual empowerment.

Jane Bennett's *Vibrant Matter* frames the world "on a less vertical plane than is common" (ix). She invites a complex, humble perspective predicated on powerlessness and a lack of control, but one that simultaneously refuses the hierarchization of a "higher" power by examining the influence that "mere" matter has on the lives around it. Her exploration of alternate materialisms and vital forces, anchored in a Spinozistic sensibility, imagine how we can participate in our environments with a limited, finite sense of agency and control. She accomplishes this by describing *distributive and emergent causalities* that do better than our general assumption of intentionality at explaining the efficacy of change. She "covers her bases" with an overview of Augustine and Kant, each of whom posit the will as something vexed.

Allowing a sense of distributive agency opens up a world of *assemblages*: while simple bodies have only the power of stubbornness or inertia, complex bodies retain their specific relation of movement and rest in relation to other entities within the context. Thus, an assemblage entails "ad hoc groupings of diverse elements, of vibrant materials of all sorts," which she illustrates through the example of a blackout, which is an assemblage of a "...volatile mix of coal, sweat, electromagnetic fields, computer programs electron streams, profit motives, heat, lifestyles, nuclear fuel, fantasies of mastery, static, legislation, water, economic theory, wire, and wood..." etc. It's an intriguing view of the world.

An example of the payoff comes in her third chapter, where she describes the relationship of food and human bodies as a way to respond to the crisis of obesity in America. Her initial example, that of eating potato chips, is brilliantly rendered: "it seems appropriate to regard the hand's actions as only quasi- or semi-intentional, for the

chips themselves seem to call forth, or provoke and stoke, the manual labor. To eat chips is to enter into an assemblage in which the “I” is not necessarily the most decisive operator.” By *operator*, she means, “A particular element can be so contingently well placed in an assemblage that its power to alter the direction or function of the whole is unusually great...” While one may be “powerless” relative to an operator, it is not because any central element “has” power.

There’s no depth in this world, no central symbol, governing plan, sense of above or beyond. All things participate within this world, with different degrees of strength relative to particular contexts. The collections that come together do so contingently.

Recovering God: Anonymity

The decentralized worldview put forth by Bennett is reinforced by contemporary visions of the role that the anonymous plays in theology. John Caputo’s “Weak Theology” is a recent example, which begins by contrasting *name* and *event*. Caputo argues that names “are historically constituted or constructed” and can “accumulate historical power and worldly prestige.” In other words, names function as symbols that anchor conceptual constellations whose preservation of the past obscures the kind of openness that it wishes to introduce to being. The anonymous alternative to name, for Caputo, is event, which reflects the “uncontainable and unconditional.” Caputo argues that “An event refers neither to a being or entity nor to being itself, but to an impulse or aspiration simmering within both the names of entities and the name of being, something that groans to be born...an event is...a distance within the heart of being, within the names for being, that makes being restless.” As an event, there’s no *thing* present—it involves a shift in how the present organizes itself, or in how we perceive its organization.

The implications of this are put in terms of the Kingdom of God, which contrasts with that of the world. Caputo argues that, “The world stands for the business as usual of the powerful...the oppressive order of presence...while the Kingdom contradicts the world, which means that

it calls for something contrary to the world.” Rather than a transcendent view of God put in terms of a Sovereign Good, Caputo invites thinking of “God” as an event of “...solicitation, an event of deconsolidation, an electrifying event-ing disturbance...”

Tom Altizer, in his earlier *Total Presence*, provides a meditation on anonymity that reaches similar conclusions, allowing namelessness to become the hinge connecting the existential and the ontological. Further, his anonymity connects the experience of recovery, where one relinquishes the object of desire that had organized one’s world, and structural shifts into imminent theological worldviews. He claims that:

anonymity does name God, and it names God if only because it embodies a total presence, and a presence which we can not only actually see, but can see only because we can no longer see or envision what we once named as God. Just as a purely anonymous vision is impossible apart from the loss or dissolution of an interior and immanent center, so likewise is it impossible apart from the loss or reversal of a transcendent ground or center.

In other words, addicts in recovery and others who have undergone a Tillichian crisis of meaninglessness are uniquely able to gain an anonymous vision and thereby glimpse total presence.

For Altizer, eschatology must be seen as negative as well as positive:

The Kingdom of God is fully present, yes, but its presence effects a full negation of everything which otherwise stands forth as world... the redemption of the world is simultaneously the end of the world.

It is for this reason that Altizer reads the parables as claiming that distinctions such as “here” or “there” distract from the actual full presence of the Kingdom of God—but that faith in a transcendent God does this too, distracting us from nearby things.

Recovering God: Anonymous Assemblages

This sense of an anonymous total presence that is interrupted by naming it God correlates nicely with Bennett’s work on the notion of “A life,” impersonal existence read through Deleuze;

and it also provides a context to think through how the Kingdom of God—understood through Tillich’s awareness of its historical situatedness—can come into being without being commanded.

Bennett’s most brilliant chapter expands on her notion of the assemblage to describe how publics emerge. Building on Dewey’s notion of the public, she provides the following life-cycle:

A public is a cluster of bodies harmed by the actions of others or even by actions born from their own actions as these trans-act; harmed bodies draw near each other and seek to engage in new acts that will restore their power, protect against future harm, or compensate for damage done—in *that* constitutes their political action, which, fortunately or unfortunately, will also become conjoint action with a chain of indirect, unpredictable consequences.

The human bodies involved in this public, whose autonomy is already circumscribed by the other actants that stimulate, depress, and otherwise affect it, are collected not by a solution or a symbol of strength, but by a sense of shared harm. The goal of coming together is to learn to behave otherwise. Nothing defines or compels this collective, which is always contingent, always in flux, and always engaged in negotiations. There’s no hierarchy, no central sense of authority or power. There’s just a collection of beings, some of whom are aware that they participate in a larger pattern.

These publics are not circumscribed by intentionality any more than an assemblage is; rather, these publics emerge out from a generative field. What Caputo and Altizer allow—deepening Bennett’s latent and implied theological position—is the fact that these communities can also be theological. They are neither summoned nor governed by a symbol, they are not held together by a strong force, but the resulting communities allow the Kingdom of God to become visible by sacrificing the central name or symbol of God altogether and allowing it to persist as an impersonal “life” present only within the bodies of what is assembled, as a total presence.

Conclusion

It is difficult to think beyond Tillich. I recognize that the Addict God and the notion of Recovering God do little more than re-articulate Tillich’s notion of God as a symbol, and God as the unsymbolizable. Bennett’s borrowed notion of “*A life*” that remains anonymously in the back-drop of individuals and institutions is nothing other than the God beyond the God of theism. Given the rise of the “Nones” in twenty-first century America, however, and an increasing suspicion of the logic of symbols, it seems important to follow Tillich’s thinking to its margins. It feels as though more people are forced to live without the consolation or encouragement of traditional symbols. Addiction, in particular, exacerbates the general human proclivity toward the anxieties of fate, guilt, and meaninglessness.

Yet I hope to have shown that responding to this crisis by opening the domain of absolute faith, which says “Yes” without reference to any special power, is an advantageous alternative to the traditional symbols that anchor Tillich’s system. Looking at how Tillich supports explorations of an immanent, non-symbolizable theology allows for a recovery of an important, immanent theological vision.

Communities of healing predicated on a central symbol clearly work: AA and its emphasis on absolute sobriety has flourished for a reason. That said: it does not work for everyone. A notion of an emergent, theological public that humbly recognizes the contingent assemblages of power in which they participate, seems to really take up the latent theological promise within these groups. It is a theological model more suited for philosophies of Harm Reduction than sobriety, perhaps, and for the Nones rather than for believers. But, perhaps more than any other, this approach to theology and to healing is what we are summoned to explore.

[Editor’s note: this paper was submitted without references.]

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FERTILE GRUND: REMATERIALIZING TILlich'S GROUND AS SOIL

O'NEIL VAN HORN

I. Prelude

It is no question that we are on fragile ground. Human relation with the Earth may now be better characterized by fracking and mining than sowing and cultivating, rendering webs of life possibly irreparable. Indeed, the soil on which we tread is laced with the sins of broken covenants, strewn with Roundup, crude oil, uranium. As tides rise and deserts expand, might it at all be possible to find common ground, especially as it diminishes in size and fertility? Given the scope of such problems, what are the odds that a long-dead Protestant theologian might aid some form, any form, of resistance, of survival? In this naive hope, I press on, contending that there might be some value in digging into Paul Tillich's notion of "ground."¹

While theologians such as Michael F. Drummy have illustrated the fertility of Tillichian thought, in general, as a resource for ecological theologies,² it seems that Tillich's fundamental concept of "ground" has been left uncultivated. In this paper, I will argue that the Tillichian ground lends itself to the dirtier work of constructing a "soiled" ecotheology. The purpose of this present paper is not yet to construct a robustly Tillichian ecotheology of ground, but rather to first demonstrate that this possibility exists through an analysis of Tillich's relationship with the more-than-human world, a reflection on the pointedly ecological hints in some of Tillich's key influences and terms, an erosion of ground as foundation, and a fertilization of Tillich's ground with the assistance of new materialist thinkers. *And what good might this all of this do?* It might yet reveal a contentious and courageous way of being in the world that extends a spark of divinity to the Earth-ground with the hope that it might be nurtured and, daringly, sustained.

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II. Tillich and the More-than-Human World

As is becoming more apparent in light of the academy's increased emphasis on ecological matters, Paul Tillich's connection with the more-than-human world significantly informed his theology. Tillich describes his affinity for his environment as a long-held passion in his autobiography, *On the Boundary*. Despite his mythic attraction to urban life, he describes his "ties to the country" as "even stronger."³ He persists, in a moment of deep *poiesis*, stating: "Nearly all the great memories and longings of my life are interwoven with landscapes, soil, weather, the fields of grain and the smell of the potato plant in autumn, the shapes of clouds, and with wind, flowers and woods."⁴ He continues, reflecting on his love for the sea—a discussion that will be saved for the following section, as it presents significant theological consequences.

Outside of Tillich's inherited nature philosophies from thinkers like F.W.J. von Schelling, he also found great inspiration from other writers—poets, especially. He suggests that thinkers, like Rainer Maria Rilke and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, "have proposed this way of penetrating into the depth of nature."⁵ In reference to their nature-oriented poetry, Tillich asserts, "The power and meaning of nature must be sought within and through its physical structures. Power and physical character, meaning and objective structure, are not separated in nature."⁶ He also confesses that many of his theological concepts were conceived in nature, among the trees and the sea.⁷ Through both literary interests and a biographical affinity for his environment, we discover that Tillich has prepared a dirty ground for us to cultivate.

Tillich's rarely-discussed work *My Travel Diary: 1936* is filled with descriptions of landscapes, weather, and the broader natural world. Jerald C. Brauer notes in the introduction to Tillich's diary that Tillich was concerned "that nature be seen as a finite form through which the infinite was manifest."⁸ Further, "Such a concern for nature is deeper than aesthetic, it involves the center of his being. Yet this is not romanticism or pantheism. The divine is encountered through nature, but is not to be confused with nature. The infinite is the

ground of nature, and nature points to that depth of reality, but nature is not divine.”⁹ One’s particular environment is symbolic in that it both participates in the divine and simultaneously points beyond itself towards the divine. While Brauer’s assessment of nature in the theology of Tillich simply dichotomizes (mono)theism and pantheism in crude terms (given his commitment to preserving Tillich as an “orthodox” Protestant theologian), I maintain Tillich’s liminality as a nuanced, panentheistic thinker whose creative ground flows through each tree, critter, human, stream.

It is worth repeating here Tillich’s great question, for us now assuming an ecological tone: “What...has the Christian message to say about man’s (sic) predicament in this world?”¹⁰ This question reminds the theologian to consider Gaia. Theologian Pan-Chiu Lai draws our attention to the centrality of the earth in Tillich’s writing. Beyond referencing works such as Tillich’s sermon “Nature, Also, Mourns for a Lost Good” which includes the environment within the scope of eschatological redemption, Lai contends that not only did Tillich anticipate our present ecological crisis, but also the necessity of a Christian (or, at least, theological) response. According to Lai, Tillich became deeply concerned with “...not only the existence of the earth *but also the meaning of the existence of the earth.*”¹¹ In Tillich’s words, “Only the eternal can give us the certainty that the earth, and with it, mankind (sic), has not existed in vain...”¹² The universal crisis at stake, the fragility of Gaia, might become of ultimate concern—the Tillichian object of theology.¹³

Self-professedly inspired by his natural surroundings, we uncover some kernel of permission from Tillich to explore the ways in which his philosophical concepts can contribute to earth-centric theologies and earth-honoring activism. For what purpose exactly? For moving toward a hopeful and courageous way of toiling—one which seeks to embrace difference in the face of climate injustice.

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III. A Soiled *Grund*

A. The Seed of Schelling

To begin considering the plausible ecotheological implications of the Tillichian “ground,” it is vital to first trace the ways in which the work of Tillich’s predecessors, especially Schelling, flows into his theological imagination. Through his doctoral studies on Schelling, Tillich encountered the edgy, unruly boundary of the abyss.

It would seem that Schelling’s move beyond the theoretical and into the dirtier, grounded empirical pushed Tillich in a similar fashion. God, in Tillich’s interpretation of Schelling, is “creative nature” and “creative identity.”¹⁴ Theologian John J. Thatamanil notes the elements of creativity in Tillich’s own theology. While reflecting on Tillich’s preoccupation with the language, Thatamanil contends: “Precisely this desire to avoid so unworthy a conception of God drives Tillich to insist that God is better regarded as the *creative ground of being* rather than as a supranatural deity.”¹⁵ According to Tillich, in Schelling “there arises a completely new understanding of the relation of nature and spirit...[where] spirit [is joined] indissolubly to nature...There is no spirit apart from nature any more than there is a nature apart from spirit.”¹⁶ To be clear, this proto-pantheist move from Schelling would not appropriately describe the work of Tillich. Nevertheless, Tillich’s pan-en-theistic approach finds nature in God (and God in nature) in a profound way. Sigridur Gudmarsdottir reminds us that despite the fact that Tillich acknowledged the influence of Schelling on him, “he also seems to have had an ambiguous relationship to him.”¹⁷ Nevertheless, we press on.

Where Schelling argues that “God is to be seen in nature, not merely grasped conceptually, that subjectivity is in nature itself and hence it can be known by man,” we might imagine the specter of Tillich dramatically shuddering.¹⁸ In multiple ways, Tillich moves away from such language of “knowability,” qualifying knowledge as limited, contextual, and existential (even if Schelling here is referring to but the subjectivity of nature) carving space for the possibility of ecstatic knowing.¹⁹ Yet the effects of a Tillichian “ground” reverberate animatedly in resonance with Schelling’s insepa-

rably entangled nature and divinity. His ground rings in polyphonic accord with the intra-connection of God in all, and all in God. Michael Drummy suggests that Schelling's move to splice traditional categories of nature (earth) and spirit (God) "recovers for the Protestant tradition a sense of what Tillich refers to as 'sacramental feeling.'"²⁰ Might the earth thus shift into the space of ultimacy—that with which we are ultimately concerned?²¹ Still, it is necessary to uncover a Tillichian seed that allows for the metonymic oscillation between ground and soil.

B. Into the Tillichian Depth(s)

Before a lively re-materialization of the Tillichian ground can occur, Tillich's emphasis on "depth" must be explored. There must be reason to pursue this dirty move in an honest way. The question remains: in what ways does Tillich's "ground" lend itself to a soily connotation? That is, how might Tillich's "ground," in his own theology, reflect an organic nuance? I propose that Tillich's reflection on "depth" and "abyss" does indeed disclose an earthy element to the Tillichian "ground."

Despite Tillich's aforementioned affinity for the terrestrial, natural world, he possessed an even deeper, saltier love: the sea. He spent weeks and, eventually, months by the sea each year, from the age of eight onwards.²² Not only was it an aesthetic attraction that drew him there, but also a theological one. He recognized the sea as an "experience of the infinite bordering on the finite.... [as] a symbol that gave substance to [his] emotions and creativity to [his] thought."²³ It is the sea that helped Tillich supply, as he puts it, the "imaginative element necessary for the doctrine of the Absolute as both *ground and abyss* of dynamic truth...the thrust of the eternal into finitude."²⁴ His preoccupation with depth flows backwards through his writings to his adolescence and beyond. The only poem written by Tillich, composed when he was but seventeen years of age while attempting to make sense of his mother's premature death, is "a poem of the abyss," according to Gudmarsdottir.²⁵ Tillich finds in the sea a helpful symbol for articulating the abysmal ground; the ebbing and flowing sea illustrates the flowing matrix of fertility that is the ground.

Rather problematically, Tillich's *grund* has been as-

sociated with that idealist "absolute foundation." I contend that Tillich's understanding is much less *firma* than has been suggested. His "ground" carries with it a rather sea-like—*tebomic*—depth. Tillich's sermon, "The Depth of Existence," exposes the instability of his "ground." He notes that terms like "'deep,' 'depth,' and 'profound,'" become of ultimate significance when applied to our religious symbols.²⁶ He makes his move away from an idealist *terra firma* quite evident by arguing that "The name of [the] infinite and inexhaustible *depth* and ground of all being is *God*."²⁷ Tillich's ground is far from a solid rock of absolutes. Instead, he insists on a conception of the Ultimate as "both ground and abyss of dynamic truth."²⁸ It must also be noted that it is neither the stable depth sought by radical orthodoxy, whose depth might be likened to but the 'deep-end' of the community swimming pool.²⁹ Tillich's depth is unruly: uncontainable flux of unthinkably infinite depth, all-the-while grounded. It is perhaps a Kellerian "face" of it.³⁰ As is, I hope, becoming apparent, the Tillichian "ground" is *anything but antithetical* to a shifting *adamah*—a matrix of profundity.

Further destabilization of "ground" occurs when one examines the synonyms Tillich utilized when referring to the Divine. Drummy asserts that "God is...variously understood by Tillich as the creative and abysmal ground, power, and depth of being."³¹ While some scholars such as Richard Grigg distinguish between "depth of being" and "being-itself" (which he refers to as the "depth of the structure of being"³²), I find little reason, siding with Drummy, to separate these terms.³³ In conjunction with Drummy, this project assumes that "the terms ground of being, power of being, and depth of being [are to] be considered synonymous symbolic correlates to the non-symbolic philosophical statement that 'God is being-itself.'"³⁴ I posit, yet again, a tillable ground, radically opposed to the concrete slab of foundation.

The shifting ground begins to quake. Tillich muses, "all visible things have a surface...that side of things that first appears to us...[W]e try to penetrate below the surfaces in order to learn what things really are."³⁵ There is a face and a depth, inseparable. Both the theologian and the gardener, (if not one-and-the-same), dig and till and probe as a means of uncovering rich organic mat(t)er. This mat(t)er nurtures a fragment of the Divine spark in its role as a flowing womb—the possibility of enlivening creativity.

Tillich mocks those who are inescapably lodged in traditional, static notions of God, claiming: "...you cannot think or say...Being is surface only."³⁶ Being-itself is a *tehom*, an abyss. Tillich captures my argument in a terse statement: "He (sic) who knows about depth knows about God."³⁷ Ground is a concept of depth, but only heterogeneously so.

C. Grounding Theory—Eroding “Ground as Foundation”

Having made the organic nuance of Tillich’s *grund* clear, it is necessary to wrest it from the clutches of the gory histories of *foundation* and *foundationalisms*. In order to pry these two apart and thereby re-materialize the Tillichian “ground,” there must be a fecund theoretical framework. In some way, given the urgencies of the Anthropocene, we must find a common ground without reverting to an absolute, perhaps colonial, “foundation.” To be sure, this effort, however contrived, illuminates a deeply important political consequence: if the dematerialization of any “thing” renders it an object of which an oppressor is capable of controlling, then it is my hope that a *rematerialization* might reclaim and re-infuse that thing with rightful meaning or value, no longer (as) poised for misuse or bastardization. Catherine Keller’s *Ecospirit* chapter, “Talking Dirty: Ground is Not Foundation,” provides a fecund method for this political activity, moving us towards a soiled ground. As the title of the piece reveals, Keller contends that “ground is not foundation;” instead, she proclaims, “let the earth itself be the ground.”³⁸ Any theology, Tillichian or otherwise, committed to taking seriously the materiality of our cosmos, broadly, and of our Earth, specifically, must name and nurture some uncommon common-ground. I assume the inherited qualms of poststructuralist thinkers like Keller who shudder at the thought of returning to the ontotheological grounds of theologies past. I, too, fear the restoration of any universal upon which are often built walls that divide, borders that discriminate, and empires that torture. Yet for any collective to emerge from the deconstructed ruins of our troubled, colonial pasts in order to restore just relations with the Earth, one must be able to

enter into a shared space—indeed, a commons. This theological move requires qualification if it is to prove fertile. Is it possible to yet again find a common matrix whence arise coalitions of subjects, entangled in their difference? This is precisely the hope that lies in prying “ground” from clutches of “foundation.” In this moment, this question must be addressed theoretically before ethical conclusions can flower.

In order for this poststructuralist shift to occur responsibly, there must exist a distinction between “ground” and “foundation.” While the two are often used interchangeably, their differences, I suggest, are stark. Antifoundationalist poststructuralists, inheriting the urge to deconstruct the verticalities associated with a “grounded” system (and especially one which identifies as metaphysical!) misinterpret “ground” as foundation, an unshakeable subtext below the text.³⁹

Classical theologies have comfortably rested on their assumed foundation of certainties and logic-based arguments. The postmodern turn, especially after poststructuralist deconstructions, often sinks theology helplessly into groundlessness. It is through the affirmation of difference, always non-separable, that it might be possible to navigate a third way. Keller’s work strives for a recognition of the earth-ground as the grounding principle—not as objective certitude nor as baseless assumption, but rather as a divine matrix of life, of becoming. Keller meditates on the earth-ground as utterly distinct from a concrete foundation: “...the dirt shakes, shifts, creeps, and crawls...Literal ground, recycled stardust like us, oozes with life-forms. Yet nothing is more sustaining of life than the densely relational, relative stabilities of the spinning earth-ball.”⁴⁰ Keller presents this ecotheology with an alternative option between foundation and groundlessness: attend to the ground, “the earthly habitat that endlessly and differently gives rise to thought...”⁴¹ While poststructuralist and deconstructionist thinkers wish to erode any notion of absolute foundation, I maintain that through this exercise we may discover that that very ground was never absolute, static, or foundational.

Jacques Derrida lurks at the edges of this task. Derrida demands a robust explanation for any work that purports to be committed to both de-

construction and a “ground.” Through the mist he reminds, “Difference itself would be more ‘originary’” than the Heideggerian “ground in the ‘transcendence of *Dasein*.” Yet, “one would no longer be able to call [difference] ‘origin’ or ‘ground,’ those notions belonging essentially to the history of ontotheology, to the system functioning as the effacing of difference.”⁴² Despite Derrida’s aversion to difference as any sort of “ground,” I question, in the words of Keller: is it “...essential thus to reduce ground to the notion of ‘origin’ as absolute foundation?”⁴³ Surely Tillich’s *grund* was not intended to be one.

But how might this ground materialize metonymically? Keller finds her answer in the work of Luce Irigaray. In order to “aerate” the ground, to chip away at the projected connotations of foundation imposed upon it, a “groundless ground” comprising a “relation between” may serve as a third way between foundation and groundlessness.⁴⁴ This “groundless ground,” I argue, opens space for the possibility of a shared transversal within and around which communities and coalitions might emerge, all the while ensuring the deconstruction and de-territorialization of any universal *grund* (in the traditional sense of the term).⁴⁵ This ground cannot be leased but is rather a commonwealth. Keller muses with Irigarayan inspiration, “Might we not infuse the discourse of ground with elemental passion? The dirty ground, earth itself, does not compete with other elements but rather, at least from the perspective of any terrestrial, grounds them all.”⁴⁶ This earth-ground is thus the context of all contexts, not superseding or transcending, but grounding—connecting. It is in this interconnected matrix that difference is maintained and fostered. Keller thus addresses the role of the “poststructuralist transcendental”: difference.

Difference...opens an interval or space of irreducible alterity, freed from the naturalized foundation set in its empty “*Grund*.” But deconstruction might force us to choose between a purified transcendent *Grund* and a purified transcendental *Différence*. However, does not the “originarity” of difference, as it fissures the foundations that had buried it, suggest a more elemental metonymy? Might it not expose...a dirtier ground, in

which the groundless is not nihilistically triumphant but mystically irreducible?⁴⁷

Verily this mystical irreducibility, I propose, might be found in the assemblage of nonseparably different elements, matters, and critters which we refer to as soil. Derridean difference and Deleuzian deterritorialization, in fact, may take root in the flowing matrix that is soil.

Keller’s curiosity, echoing the gaian prophet Sallie McFague, cannot be contained: “What if we transcode God...into the groundless ground—that is, the matrix, depth, or *tehom* of the universe, which is Her moving body? The body of God as [Deleuze and Guattari’s] ‘body without organs?’”⁴⁸ Any basic study in soil science will reveal this very notion of groundless ground, of a body without organs. Soil is not any one thing but a vast matrix of relationships, cycles, events. The contributions of organic and inorganic participants are necessarily linked as each life-supporting interaction lapses into the past at the edge of chaos. Soil is most clearly understood as an entangled web of microbes, minerals, water, and air. Out of this womb of interdependent events comes forth an ever-unfolding mosaic of biodiversity in life that comprises our biospheric foundation.⁴⁹ The groundless ground, the matrix of topsoil, the vacillating *adamah* readily accepts and nurtures Keller’s cry in its web of life.

Keller provides us with the theory that breaks traditional notions of “ground” as “foundation.” Her work cultivates an affective “bloom space” for Tillich’s ground as a dusty, fecund womb for ecotheological reimagination. Reclaiming “ground” is an inherently ethical and political move. As Keller writes, “Anyone serious about feminism or any other form of resistance to power will surely want to offer ground—to give reasons, to cede turf, and to remember the shared earth that provides one common ground in which all of our contexts nest.”⁵⁰ Keller directs the weary traveler towards a meadow of communal justice, a place in which one might rest, recharge, remobilize in one’s difference with other com/pan/ions in-process.⁵¹ Yet Keller alone is not enough; Tillich reminds of the divinity of such a ground, without necessarily being reducible to it.⁵² Tillich’s “ground” “oscillates between cause and substance...the mystery which appears in revelation and which remains a mystery in its appearance.”⁵³ Such an emphasis on mystery—and mystery’s approximation to divinity—renders arrest, colonization, or patenting of the ground an impossibil-

ity. These thinkers thus synthesized, this divine ground, by virtue of its perpetual state of deconstruction, refuses to materialize into a colonial or otherwise oppressive universal. Instead, it is a multiplicitous and shared plane, indeed plain. I pray that this effort to soil Tillich's ground might give rise to a common ground—a common ground that might serve as a locus for ripe theologies to bud, catalyzing local collectives and coalitions towards movements of ecological justice, even (especially!) in the Anthropocene.

D. Rematerialization—A Deep Ground, A Grounded Depth

Tillich's ground is beginning to appear, now more than ever, like an earthy matrix—*adamah*. Let us now, as Keller suggested, “transcode God...into the groundless ground—that is, the matrix, depth, or *tehom* of the universe...Her moving body.”⁵⁴ Our trek exiting urban concrete foundations has led us to a ripe field yet to be harvested. I turn to the budding fields of the new materialisms, using both Jane Bennett's “vibrant matter” and Mel Y. Chen's “animacy” concept, to assist in uncovering the fertility of the Tillichian *grund*. With their guidance, Tillich's ground may re-animate and re-materialize into a properly organic soil with(in) which we might become continuously.

Jane Bennett's inheritance of the Deleuzian and Guattarian notion of “assemblage” moves us even closer to a re-grounded ground. Might the earth-ground—soil—be an animated assemblage, with a vibratory agency of unfolding potentialities? And, with it, Tillich's *grund*? Defined by Bennett, assemblages are:

groupings of diverse elements, of vibrant materials of all sorts. Assemblages are living throbbing confederations that are able to function despite the persistent presence of energies that confound them from within. They have uneven topographies, because some of the points at which the various affects and bodies cross paths are more heavily trafficked than others, and so power is not distributed equally across its surface.⁵⁵

Bennett strives to reveal the agency of assemblages. In doing so, she effectively undoes the binaries that (attempt to) divide us from our surroundings. She moves from the language of poles

(i.e. immanence and transcendence), instead shifting her focus onto what she refers to as vibrant matter; vibrant matter is “an active, earthy, not-quite-human capaciousness.”⁵⁶ This shift also implies a deconstruction of human/animal, among other, distinctions, breaking apart great chains of patriarchal being. In her words,

the rubric of material agency is likely to be a stronger counter to human exceptionalism, to, that is, the human tendency to understate the degree to which people, animals, artifacts, technologies, and elemental forces share powers and operate in dissonant conjunction with each other.⁵⁷

The agentive capacity of an assemblage derives from “the vitality of the materialities that constitute it.”⁵⁸ William Bryant Logan, a soil-poet of sorts, incants in solidarity with Bennett: “Inert matter! As if there ever were such a thing.”⁵⁹ Soil, that vast net of microbes and air and water and minerals, among a host of other “things,” vibrates with agency—with affective animacy. The ground is that thing, agential and affective, in which we are connected; and yet its power does not come from above or outside, nor is it uncoverable or extractable within; its power, we might say, lies *in relation*. The dirty ground becomes that in which we live and move and have our affects.

Digging further into contemporary theory, Mel Chen's work on “animacy”—which stems from cognitive linguistics and extends into matters of race, disability, and queer theory—will further the resurrection of Tillich's *grund* as a dusty web. Animacy, in the world of linguistics, has been “described variously as a quality of agency, awareness, mobility, and liveness.”⁶⁰ Animacy is quite distinct from “life” and “liveliness,” however. As Chen argues, pertinent to this present meditation on a soiled ground, “animacy activates new theoretical formations that trouble and undo stubborn binary systems of difference, including... life/death, subject/object... human/animal...”⁶¹ Aside from the microbes and other critters that contribute to soil in significant ways, it would be a mistake to refer to soil as “alive,” in the traditional (Modernist) biological sense. Yet the concept of animacy provides us with an alternative way to re-animate the ground; Chen's animacy partners with new materialisms, beginning the mattering work of folding the inanimate back into the animating

principle of Aristotle's *De Anima*, the scope thus broadens and blurs.⁶² In this way, animacy reemphasizes the sense in which agency is neither supernatural nor statically mechanistic but blurs these lines, indeed grounds them.

It is vital to note the unfixed nature of animacy on a linguistic level. Cognitive linguist Mutsumi Yamamoto contends, "Our cognition of animacy and the extent to which we invest a certain body (or body of entities) with humanness or animateness influence various levels of human language a great deal."⁶³ She detaches language's attribution or assignment of animacy values from their referents. According to Yamamoto, there is neither a consistent nor, especially, objective reflection of animacy in our language(s). Animacy provides yet another break from hierarchical ways of thinking, moving us, with a sigh of relief, further from past mistakes such as the Great Chain of Being. Animacy challenges every facet of an anthropocentric worldview, finding new ways to even conceive of consciousness.⁶⁴

But what may be of utmost concern for the re-materialized *grund* is that of the extra-linguistic consequences of the animacy concept. Yamamoto appeals to that slippery extra-linguistic effect of animacy, arguing that "this concept is *a spell which strongly influences our mind in the process of language use and a keystone which draws together miscellaneous structural and pragmatic factors...*"⁶⁵ The mystical quality of animacy illuminates the effects of linguistic practices on our relations to the world. Encased in our languages are multiplicities of meaning and affect; and, those often-hidden entanglements are implicit in our theological musings about our lived experiences, springing forth in ethical manifestations (or, sometimes, lack thereof).

But why devote such great attention to the reimagination of the ground in light of the new materialisms? I suggest that we return to the political elements that concern Chen. Chen pushes the work of the new materialisms further into complexities of race, politics, and economics, poignantly announcing, "...animacy is political, shaped by what or who counts as human, and what or who does not."⁶⁶ While Chen is likely thinking about entities often deemed less-than-human, such as racial minorities, queer bodies, and mistreated animals, their⁶⁷ general concern with envi-

ronmental issues makes this conceptual application in the present ground-centric project quite organic.

Following Chen's argument linking de-animation with biopolitical violence, one may recognize that the earth-ground has become a political object, de-animated for the purposes of colonization, territorialization, and, ultimately, profit. Jane Bennett's project of constructing a vibrant materiality is also centered on a similar political query: "How would political responses to public problems change were we to take seriously the vitality of (nonhuman) bodies?"⁶⁸ While her question remains open, we are well-versed in what the world looks like when nonhuman bodies (and even some human bodies) are not taken seriously as vital or vibrant. Institutions and structures, such as Monsanto, actively incarnate a notion of soil as means, product, or object. When addressed in these manners—as an entity to be treated or dominated—the overtly political nature of animacy becomes apparent. That which is de-animated can be treated as though it were owned or controlled. This principle is pervasive across countless registers, impacting organisms⁶⁹ of all varieties.

The centrality of animacy in efforts of subjugation, oppression, and colonization reveals itself throughout the course of history: indigenous populations around the globe lessened to the status of animals in order to justify their enslavement, animals purported not to feel pain and thus reduced to cosmetic-product test-subjects, trees lessened to an economic figure as lumber, and so on into the bloody and brutal annals of political colonization of bodies, beings, and mat(t)er. The de-animation of the ground thus constitutes one of the greatest political turns made by the human species—the effort to control the very thing that brings us life: the mattering Mater of soil. This project is then a counterpower which strives to reconnect the divine-ground to the earth-ground (and not essentially!), bringing to light a theoretical framework dedicated not purely to academic verbosity but also to eco-political activism.

IV. An Agrarian Postlude

As practical theologian, Fred Bahnson noted in his interactions with conventional tobacco

farmers in the rural South of the United States, “Living soil [became] dirt—a convenient place to prop your crop while you fed it chemicals...”⁷⁰ Within supposedly “conventional” forms of farming, the vitality of the ground has been lost.

The practice of agribusinesses and similar structures to objectify the ground as inanimate object to be stripped of nutrients, pumped full of synthetic chemicals, and ceaselessly tilled is nothing other than a decision to choose capital over life. This is not limited to the agricultural sector, though. Unjust environmental practices will not just strip the land of its nutrients, but also the very potentialities for new becomings of life.⁷¹ If soil is the skin that simply must be peeled back to reveal the “precious” minerals and gems, as contemporary mining practices suggest,⁷² we will soon discover the inedibility of our greed. While strip-mining and agribusiness models⁷³ have proven lucrative for a select few, they concurrently impoverish the ground and all that becomes in the ground. In this utterly toxic anecdote, the ways in which materiality and discursivity, flesh and word, unfold together are clear. The de-animation and objectification of matter is entangled in the complexities of vast economic machines such as neoliberal consumer capitalism. A vibrant, relational *grund*, irreducibly blurring “ground” and soil, initiates an alternative model from which might emerge an ethics, economics, and politics that takes seriously the inseparable intra-connection between organisms—in this case, specifically between humans and the earth-ground.

Today’s popular concepts about the divine mirror a Monsanto-like patenting and control of the earth-ground. Just as the earth-ground has become not a net but an object, so too has the divine-ground been stripped of her relationality. I argue that the result of de-animating the ground has led to its control, colonization, and oppression. It is entirely possible that the very purpose of such a theological move was and is to oppress; in any case, the divine has become a fixed tool at the disposal for any instance of oppression that may arise—an object able to be manipulated for any one person or community’s gain. If one can monopolize a community’s understanding of the divine into a static, patriarchal, or otherwise oppressive form, one assumes the right to dictate the

ethics which follows from this normative vision of the divine-ground.

My hope and intention is that the fluidity of this ground will make it impervious to the control of any one group, community, even species—a pluralistic vision which imagines the groundless ground as a sort of web within which all become. I submit that naming the divine as a soiled ground—a matrix of connections which lures towards courageous activity in the face of possibly impending injustice, infertility, even death—might serve as an effort to distance the divine from coercion, especially in relation to the (eco-)ethical principles which might take root were it not for theological manipulation (or, perhaps better, gerrymandering).

Tillich’s ground can hardly be referred to as stable, much less a foundation. It is far deeper and far more animate than we could have ever anticipated. It is rich in organic, dirty life. The Tillichian ground of being no longer remains in stasis but is able to flow freely—and with it, I hope, renewed possibilities for some uncommon ‘common ground,’ ever necessary with climate change now here. I extend an invitation: to continue toiling until the ground finds *shalom*.

¹ To further step out on fragile ground: let me be clear that this project is an exercise in constructive theology and, at times, *theo-poetics*; it makes no attempt to pretend to be systematic nor even orthodoxly Tillichian (should such a thing exist), but rather engages in tilling Tillich’s work for renewed fecundities.

² See Michael F. Drummy, *Concern for Creation: Paul Tillich and the Ecology of Being* (Ann Arbor: UMI Dissertation Services, 1999).

³ Paul Tillich, *On the Boundary: An Autobiographical Sketch* (New York: Scribner, 1966), 17.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Paul Tillich, “Nature and Sacrament,” in *Paul Tillich: Theologian of the Boundaries*, ed. Mark Taylor (London: Collins, 1987), 90.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Tillich, *On the Boundary*, 17-18.

⁸ Jerald C. Brauer, Introduction to *My Travel Diary: 1936; Between Two Worlds*, by Paul Tillich, trans. Maria Pelikan (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), 17.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Paul Tillich, *The Eternal Now* (New York: Scribner, 1963), 56. Also, this same issue is pressed further a few years later by Lynn White, Jr. White seeks to

further articulate how Christianity had strayed from Tillich's central task. See Lynn White, Jr., "The Historical Roots of our Ecologic Crisis," *Science* 155.3767 (March 10, 1967): 1203-1207.

¹¹ Pan-Chiu Lai, "Paul Tillich and Ecological Theology," *The Journal of Religion* 79.2 (1999): 240; emphasis mine.

¹² Tillich, *The Eternal Now*, 64.

¹³ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951-63), 1:12.

¹⁴ Paul Tillich, *Mysticism and Guilt-Consciousness in Schelling's Philosophical Development* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1974), 54.

¹⁵ John J. Thatamanil, *The Immanent Divine: God, Creation, and the Human Predicament* (Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 2006), 19. Emphasis mine.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 57; as cited by Drummy, 73.

¹⁷ Sigridur Gudmarsdottir, *Tillich and the Abyss: Foundations, Feminism, and Theology of Praxis* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 119.

¹⁸ Frederick de Wolfe Bolman, Jr., Introduction to *The Ages of the World*, by F. W. J. von Schelling (New York: AMS Press, 1967), 26-27.

¹⁹ Cf. Tillich, *On the Boundary*, 81-90.

²⁰ Drummy, 78; see also Paul Tillich, *A History of Christian Thought* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 443.

²¹ Cf. Drummy, 106-107.

²² Tillich, *On the Boundary*, 17-18.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*; emphasis mine.

²⁵ Gudmarsdottir, *Tillich and the Abyss*, 2. The poem reads: "Am I then I? who tells me that I am! / Who tells me what I am, what I shall become? / What is the world's and what life's meaning? / What is being and passing away on earth? / O abyss without ground, dark depths of madness! / Would that I had never gazed upon you and were sleeping like a child." Paul Tillich, cited in Rollo May, *Paulus: Reminiscences of a Friendship* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), 41.

²⁶ Paul Tillich, "Depth of Existence" in *The Shaking of the Foundations*, (New York: Scribner, 1948), 53.

²⁷ *Ibid.* 57; emphasis mine.

²⁸ Tillich, *On the Boundary*, 18, 30; emphasis mine.

²⁹ On this notion of depth in radical orthodoxy (*à la* John Millbank), Catherine Keller writes: "Though its taste for an infinite and trustworthy depth flows close to tehomitic theology, radical orthodoxy identifies that depth with the stability of a foundation, and so depends upon shallow dichotomies [like] order vs. chaos, solidity vs. flux, behind vs. face, One vs. nothing—and of course Christ vs. atheism." Catherine Keller, *Face of*

the Deep: A Theology of Becoming (New York: Routledge, 2003), 38.

³⁰ That is, of Catherine Keller. See Keller, *Face of the Deep*.

³¹ Drummy, 161.

³² Richard Grigg, *Symbol and Empowerment: Paul Tillich's Post-Theistic System* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1985), 62-63.

³³ I find Tillich's articulation most open to this position: "Since God is the ground of being, he (sic) is the ground of the structure of being. He is not subject to this structure; the structure is grounded in him. He is this structure, and it is impossible to speak about him except in terms of this structure. God must be approached cognitively through the structural elements of being-itself. These elements make him a living God, a God who can be man's (sic) concrete concern. They enable us to use symbols which we are certain point to the ground of reality." Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 1:238.

³⁴ Drummy, 161; Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 1:238.

³⁵ Tillich, "Depth of Existence," 54.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 57.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Catherine Keller, "Talking Dirty: Ground is Not Foundation" in *Ecospirit: Religions and Philosophies for the Earth*, eds. Laurel Kearns and Catherine Keller (New York: Fordham University Press, 2007), 65.

³⁹ As Keller notes, this is partially due to a linguistic problem: "...*fond*, in *foundation*, translates as both 'bottom' and 'ground.'" Catherine Keller, "Introduction: The Process of Difference, the Difference of Process," in *Process and Difference: Between Cosmological and Poststructuralist Postmodernisms*, eds. Catherine Keller and Anne Daniell (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2002), 12.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 13; author's emphasis.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 23.

⁴³ Keller, "Talking Dirty...", 68.

⁴⁴ See Luce Irigaray, *The Forgetting of Air in Martin Heidegger*, trans. Mary Beth Mader (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1999), 85.

⁴⁵ Cf. Keller, "Talking Dirty...", 74.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 68.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 69.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 74.

⁴⁹ For more, see James T. Staley and Anna-Louise Reysenbach, *Biodiversity of Microbial Life: Foundation of Earth's Biosphere* (New York: Wiley, 2002).

⁵⁰ Keller, "Introduction: The Process of Difference...," 13.

⁵¹ While the specific purpose of this thesis is to suggest to the reader the possibility of shared ground in which she might engage in justice efforts of the ecological sort, it also broadly offers a theoretical space to address justice issues across all registers. Additionally, *com/pan/ions* is written as such to remind the reader of the word's etymological materiality—quite literally those with (*com-*) bread (*panis*).

⁵² On the irreducibility of God, see Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 1:236-237.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 1:156.

⁵⁴ Keller, "Talking Dirty...," 74.

⁵⁵ Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 23-24.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 34.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ William Bryant Logan, *Dirt: The Ecstatic Skin of the Earth* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1995), 115.

⁶⁰ Mel Y. Chen, *Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 2.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 3. Larry L. Rasmussen makes this same move, however consciously. He writes: "...soil and soul—s-o-u-l—share a natural affinity. Both are living substances and to the degree that life "animates" them both, both lend themselves to cultivation, whether of immortal truth or new life. Given the connection 'neath our feet—soil and soul/sole—we are evidently 'bio-spiritual' creatures by nature, a humic substance that requires cultivation of the soul and an entity that, by virtue of its vocation, cultivates." Larry L. Rasmussen, "The Sacred 'neath Your Sole," (speech, Louisville, Festival of Faith Prayer Breakfast, November 9,

2010), <http://users.drew.edu/lkearns/Ground-for-Hope-2010/rasmussen%20LouisvilleSoilAddress.pdf>

⁶² Chen, 5.

⁶³ Mutsumi Yamamoto, *Animacy and Reference: A Cognitive Approach to Corpus Linguistics* (Amsterdam: J. Benjamins Publishing Co., 1999), 1.

⁶⁴ See Yamamoto, 15.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 180; emphasis mine.

⁶⁶ Chen, 30.

⁶⁷ Chen's preferred pronoun.

⁶⁸ Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, viii.

⁶⁹ That is, organism in the Whiteheadian sense of the term.

⁷⁰ Fred Bahnson, *Soil and Sacrament: A Spiritual Memoir of Food and Faith* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2013), 181.

⁷¹ The amount of information on soil erosion and soil health is staggering. Our global shift to unsustainable agricultural practices of 'monoculture' agriculture and using synthetic fertilizers, amongst other issues, is steadily destroying the topsoil of our planet. For one take on this issue, see: "Soil Erosion and Degradation," *World Wildlife Fund*, Accessed: August 2, 2018, <http://www.worldwildlife.org/threats/soil-erosion-and-degradation>

⁷² "Environmental Risks of Mining," *Mission 2016: The Future of Strategic Natural Resources*, Accessed August 2, 2018,

<http://web.mit.edu/12.000/www/m2016/finalwebsite/problems/mining.html>. For alternative, reimagined manners of 'green' mining in the future, see: "Green Mining," *Mission 2016: The Future of Strategic Natural Resources*, Accessed August 2, 2018, <http://web.mit.edu/12.000/www/m2016/finalwebsite/solutions/greenmining.html>.

⁷³ These are but two exemplary manifestations of the schemes of multi-national corporations made possible by globalized, neoliberal capitalism.

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